 

**MEETING MINUTES**

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**Date: 04/01/22**

**Topic: Final Fee Recommendation**

**Present:**

**- Voting members:** Warren Sipe, Noah Robertson, Sean Terrey, Najee Rodriguez, Claire Kelling, Xiaoru Shi, Latisha Franklin, Megan Minnich, Jake Snyder, Nora Van Horn, Erin Boas, Schönn Franklin

**- Nonvoting members:** Yidi Wang, Alexa Clayton, Barry Bram, Jolinda Wilson,

**Absent:**

**Agenda:**

1. **Call to Order and Opening Roll Call**

*Meeting called to order at 8:04 a.m.*

1. **Adoption of the Agenda**

*Motioned, seconded, no objections.*

1. **Adoption of the Minutes (March 25, 27, 28, 2022)**

*Motioned, seconded, no objections to all minutes.*

1. **Public Comment**

Yidi: I really appreciate you working with the student fee board and working for one year with you all

1. **Old Business:**

*No old business.*

1. **New Business**

*No new business.*

1. **Topics of Discussion:**
	1. **Final Fee Recommendation**

Claire: We will go through slides. You can feel free to stop me at any point along the way. We also have something we would like to discuss at the end. We worked on defining our values, had a focus group on facilities and have 5 new fee requests. We tried to make our process more efficient, and I am really grateful to all these members this year. We usually only meet from 8-10 on Fridays but they put in more than a dozen hours in off cycle meetings. Tony and Nora did a great job of adding historical members from last year. At large delegate applications are open until 5 pm today for those of you who are eligible to come back. We are planning on going through our standing allocations first. We saw a good number of requests for increases and decreases. First up is student legal services where the board support two new programs which include the name change voucher program and conflict voucher program. We want this to be a pilot program and it actually is a decrease which comes from cost sharing’s. Next up is the gender equity center where we supported an increase for this year. Next up is CSD where the fee board supports the increases in student wages, etc. The PRCC asked for an increase mostly due to their pilot program last year. But we did note that it was a largely student led initiative. Student Parent Child Care Subsidy where we agreed to a transition plan which is actually year two of the transition plan. SOTP was a bit complicated this year. First, is generally the allocation. We decided to support the increases for Fall and Summer Welcome but did not choose to grant the increase for the Encore Theater Program. We did not see an increased engagement for graduate and professional students. BGSA and GPSA have tours which can help SOTP come up with ideas for increase programming. Next up is CAPS which had quite a big increase this year. We would like to support both new positions. We have asked CAPS to increase on equity and inclusion. However, since this is an assistant position, we would like cost sharing to be explored. We noted that both of the positions are focused on University Park but if they expand, we want to look into cost sharing. Next up is the BJC. This is one of the only places that requested flat funding, but we requested a decrease. This decrease is due to the lack of responsiveness to a student advisory board, etc. Next up is CPA which we supported flat funding for but does not support reallocation of funds between the tucket subsidy and the opportunity fund. Next up is Campus Rec who asked for flat funding and we would like to grant this. This is flat due to salary savings during the pandemic. Even small allocations to something this big can have effects on the fee. UPAC also asked for flat funding and we recommend the board monitor the variance and continued need. This is largely due to unknown utilization from the pandemic. Student Activities has a lot of sub parts. First is programming, then leadership and student organization support who also asked for a decrease. Next, we have the office of student activities. We said we would not like to grant an increase to the golf event and wanted to improve outreach. The MLK Jr Commemoration asked for a decrease. The Student Farm has not secured cost sharing with Housing and Food but were otherwise supportive of the 25%. With UPUA is up for review of their allocation amount next year. We want events to be more accessible and see how they bring student fee back into their events. Next up is GPSA, we would like to see more fee board values. CCSG is also up for review next year and we would like to see increased outreach to graduate students. The board does not support the use of UPSB funds toward the retreat even though it is technically eligible. In the future, funds have to be spent in the manner they are allocated.

First up is UHS who asked to end the pilot program. We asked if they would be open to continuing the pilot program and decrease the program amount which is consistent with their utilization so far. Next up is the Lion’s Pantry and we support their request. They also asked for $100,000 are for food and supplies and we would like that to be a pilot amount. They have successful pay roll programs. Next up is the Sustainability Institute and we support their request in full. Next up is SDR which had a two-part allocation for a position and renovation for their space. We are supportive of the program’s coordinator. OGEEP also has two position and we decided to support a little bit less than they asked and slightly above the mid-level. The positions may not support recruitment events. We also noted exploration of cost sharing and use of central funds. The equity fund was a new initiative. Formal review is every 5 years, but we want the amount to be reviewed next year. Next up is more detail about the Lion’s Pantry Renovation. The project overlaps with this year’s boards terms. Even the expenses that are after July, we said that might cause issues for UPAC. They found expenses for new shelving and a front desk. Next up are our facilities recommendations and we support flat funding for the HUB Reserve. We have a new policy that they return to the fee board before spending funds from the reserve. The environmental sustainability fund project had four chosen for hearings. ESF would use part of the reserve to fully fund these projects. They should find donors for the student farm project. We are committed to facilities debts from previous boards, and they are refinanced this year. This is the last year of the HUB expansion debts. We want to support the HUB Affinity space and the SDR facilities renovations. We want to keep spending flat. Proceeded not the fund the Natatorium, Fischer Hall, and Stone Valley at this time. We talked about a feasibility study for the Wellbeing Building and HUB expansion but would prioritize the Wellbeing Building study first. We noted our concern about not having capacity for smaller projects. Our final fee recommendation is $274.74 per student per semester, and we would like to make this a whole number. Otherwise, this is our recommendation.

Damon: The work of this board is always very impressive. I wish we had a count of how many hours you have invested in this work. Costs normally go up for things so its good that some people came and asked for less. You had five new requests and that’s just the beginning. This fee is going to become an attractive place to go as money gets tighter. This is getting a little fuzzy that these are not only nonacademic related. I’d like to talk about that. If we open it up to everyone, students may be impacted negatively.

Claire: We did have a pretty extensive conversation about credit bearing and professional development.

Sean: A lot of the positions offered to us were student facing. In the future, the board should ask how much positions are going to effect students. Overall, the benefit we saw on the student experience was the reason we went forward with that (CAPS)

Schonn: We considered three things. The first was whether it was student facing and if you received academic credit for it.

Damon: I would point of OGEEP, a lot of college are creating student engagement offices which sounds like its student facing but at the same time do you share any of my concern that you’re opening up a gate to invite considerable amount of requests that the Chief Academic Officer should be responsible for.

Schonn: I think it is an understandable concern. They do events through OGEEP’s budget. I understand coming to the board with specific requests. With OGEEP we talked about not doing recruitment at all.

Claire: We told them they can’t use any of the funds toward recruitment.

Erin: We did have extensive conversation about the definition of out of the classroom. Out of the classroom means out of your degree. Text prep is not in PSU classes

Warren: I do share the concern about the definition of the out of class experience. It becomes difficult to vote in favor that seem to be more fun when we are being asked about projects for underrepresented groups on campus. Perhaps the focus of future boards will change. We need more feedback to see where money can come from

Sean: I do think the intelligence and integrity of the members of the board are of high development. It is up to the new fee request committee and new body as a whole to vote on those and there’s enough inspection within that process.

Nora: I share those concerns and the way we voted is reflective of that. A lot of members abstained on the OGEEP vote and I voted no on the CAPS position. I also think we are put in a difficult position and people think if we don’t fund things we don’t care. One of the things that is difficult if viewing us as a semi representative body of students. I think there should be more transparency, but the rhetoric is that money is very tight. I think moving forward it would be helpful to have a change in rhetoric about money being tight.

Damon: Money being tight is a simple thing. The fee board is relatively small portion of overall funding. I think to the extent we can have language that is clearer, may help them not have the impulse to come racing to the fee board.

Tony: I recall from last year that we had an open board policy where we accepted everything but this year, we had a large increase on proposals. It pushes students away coming to Penn State due to the inflation in the economy and increased fee. I agree that we need more transparency.

Latisha: I wanted emphasize Warren’s specific comment about choosing about fun things and things important to the student. There are some things that are put into comparison where we would rather have better mental health then Stone Valley for example. In terms of the OGEEP office, they emphasized wanting to expand their bandwidth so they can expose undergrad student to continuing the graduation

Claire: The NFR put us in a bad position and the indication was that if we don’t fund them, they won’t happen. There is concern about public image. If you vote no for legitimate reasons, then you don’t support students and that could damage the fee board for years. I am not sure how our language could be clearer.

Megan: I also voted no for OGEEP with the same concerns, but I hope the next fee board visits the definition of the out of class experience.

Schonn: Before we even discuss it, there is an eligibility vote if it follows our guidelines. I don’t think the SFB should be funding salaries. I don’t think the board should be paying for leadership positions. If we narrow it too much it puts a handicap on the board.

Warren: There needs to be a conversation about the physical capabilities of the board. Within the next couple years if the NFR continues to grow, it could hurt the board.

Claire: We have tried really hard to find cost savings, BJC is a good example. Whole numbers are nice for bills, but we think cents matter. I would love to hear your feedback on this, Sara.

Sara: I am impressed with the process and thoughtfulness going into these conversations. What you’re struggling with, is what I struggle with on a day-to-day office. There are factors that make those decisions very difficult. Some places who come in may not be able to do what they want to do if you don’t fund them. I am really impressed, again. I feel similar to Damon. We expected a 10% reduction over the last 3 years. I understand your dilemma. About the rounding, if we can make it work on bills, we can do it but I’m not 100% sure that it will work on the billing side. Maybe the difference can be put in a reserve which can give you more to allocate next year. My team has worked with you guys on the facilities side, and I’m impressed with how detailed you were and where you landed. Thank you for allowing me to participate.

Claire: We hadn’t run by the feasibility studies, and I am happy to hear you think its possible. If they figure out it’s a $250 million project rather than a $150 which can be helpful in seeing if it can be funded or not.

Sara: You can see if the limited scope is what you want to see or if it’s too expensive

Claire: For the clearer language part, I just don’t know what can be changed.

Damon: I don’t have thoughts but what is the out of classroom experience. I’m not sure if it’s clear enough to me, Barry, or some of our colleagues. If there is an opportunity to reflect on language that would be more helpful, then I think having that conversation would be useful

Claire: Long-term funding of facilities. Is a 20-year commitment, something the board should be doing. This is part of the reason we want to do the feasibility studies.

Schonn: I agree. Is it possible to see a portfolio of the projects of the graduate school? Is that something we can explore?

Damon: Definitely have a conversation with Rich and company.

Claire: Will you accept the proposal as is?

Sara: I say send it as is and if we can’t make the billing work, I will come back to you and see how you want to adjust it

Schonn: Would the excess go to the reserve?

Claire: It can and has been done in the past. There is also enrollment protection and that’s why its significant rounding which is almost $100,000 which isn’t nothing.

Schonn: Thank you to both of you and Barry as well this entire year.

Claire: I would also like to thank all of you. The responsibilities and scope have changed, and we have devoted about 100 hours to the process including orientation. It was important to me that everyone voted. I think this board has put in so much effort and we thank both of you for engaging with us.

Damon: When do we know who constitutes the board next year

Claire: The deadline is today, and it is up to our new president.

Barry: We plan to have a meeting at the end of April with the new board.

Claire: Thank you again for coming. The next item is the subcommittee reports. I want to remind everyone; subcommittee reports are due today and bullet points are okay. If you need longer let me know. Goals/purposes, what has been done and what has yet to be done.

1. **Subcommittee Reports**
	1. **Facilities**

*L. Franklin: No report*

* 1. **Environmental Sustainability**

*N. Van Horn: No report*

* 1. **Standardization**

*S. Franklin: No update*

* 1. **Communication**

*N. Robertson: No update*

* 1. **Zero-Waste**

*Nora: No report*

* 1. **Equity Fund**

*Najee: No report*

1. **Chair Report**

*C. Kelling: We will have a transition meeting on April 15 from 9-10 am. The new board is from 8-9. We will have outgoing thoughts from 9-10. Please don’t hold back on what you think and ideas you have. Other than that, thank you for a great year. I am appreciative of all of you as individuals. You did a great job of bringing your work and ideas into this room.*

1. **UPAC Chair Report**

*Alexa: I am happy to be in the room with you guys at 8 am.*

1. **Communications Intern Report**

*Kate: No report.*

1. **Comments for Good of the Order**

Latisha: Thank you to Claire. Your dedication takes a leadership quality

Schonn: I know we have no always agreed and it’s a bit stressful at times, but this is amazing group. This has been my best year yet.

Nora: Thank you Barry for being here and we appreciate your kind words and encouragement throughout this process.

Barry: The thoughtfulness, intellect, and talent that you have brought to this board is something that is a pleasure to observe. Your impacting current and future students

Sean: Take a well-deserved April off because we did a lot of good work this year and its always important to keep mental health in place.

Latisha: I’m a yoga instructor and we can do that together.

Claire: I would love to have a social debrief at some point

Erin: I want to thank everyone here. This was great getting to know you all and Warren thank you for being the financial and give insight.

Claire: Our friend Jake is all the way in Italy. We have had resignations late in the process and I’m proud and happy that Jake stayed on and contributed so well.

Latisha: Jolinda is the behind-the-scenes person at every meeting so thank you.

Schonn: Shout out to Najee and the amount of passion you brought to equity is admirable.

Jake: I wanted to say it’s been an honor working with you. Thank you, Claire, and Barry, for letting me attend virtually.

Noah: I would add that this was the worst year I’ve had in college, April Fools. But I want to echo what everyone has said. General thank you’s to everyone.

1. **Closing Roll Call**

*Meeting adjourned at 9:29 a.m*